truncate; tip of last abdominal sternite very closely and strongly punctate; wings reduced; suture between metasternum and antecoxal piece obliterated; size small (1.5–2.5 mm.); spindle-shaped; humpbacked. Known only from central California coastal region ..... *Apteraliplus*

– Medial portion of the prosternum and prosternal process forming a plateau-like elevation which is at least in part angularly separated from the lateral extensions of the prosternum, apex of posterior process squarely truncate; suture between the metasternum and antecoxal piece not obliterated; size large to small; general distribution in the cooler parts of the world. ..... *Haliplus*

NOMENCLATURE

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Nomenclature is not to be despised. It is a part of language, it is a means whereby we record and arrange our ideas. In bygone times, the human mind was aware of only a very small part of its environment, but science has enlarged our vision enormously, so that what we, collectively, know, can only be known in small part by any one individual. Most of our knowledge would be lost, were it not recorded in language, by means of names, by nomenclature.

There is one limitation to any system of rules, imposed by the methods of science. No committee or group may make a rule which asserts that which is false. Thus, it was recently shown that a certain author had proposed a generic name, without indicating any species. His specimens are preserved, and we now know whot he had. Later on another author described a species under what was presumed to be the same generic name, using, however, a different spelling. This species is not congeneric with that of the first author. Now it is alleged that the species of the second author must be the type of the genus of the first author, although the latter never saw it and actually had a different genus. This is manifestly absurd, and the way out of the difficulty is to ignore the name proposed by the first author, since he included no named species, and take up the name of the second author, with its type described by him.

More difficult is the problem of the generic name proposed

with the mention of a described species, but actually, so far as the author was concerned, based on another species, perhaps not congeneric. In such a case we must consider that the generic name was founded on an aggregate, regarded by the author as one species, but actually consisting of more than one. We should naturally refer the name to the species cited, but sometimes it happens that the author misunderstood that species, and based his genus on characters only possessed by some other specie, which he wrongly regarded as the same. If this species, in the possession of the author, had not been named or described, we have this dilemma: either the generic name must be considered as founded on the cited species, or else on a species which had not been described, in which case the name would have no valid basis. Sometimes the above facts could not be ascertained from a study of the published records. It seems very desirable to rule that in general unpublished information should not be used to describe questions of nomenclature, when it disagrees with what has been published. For example, a certain author described a "species" which actually consisted of two. Another writer took one of these as representing the species, but on looking, at a much later date, at the original specimens, the type label was found on the other species. Which then is the type of the species?

Perhaps the worst confusion arises from the interpretation by some authors of the rule concerning secondary homonyms. The matter came to a head in this form. Numerous species had been described in several related genera, and these genera were accepted by all except a certain French author, who threw them all together, with the result of finding a number of apparent homonyms, which had (it was held) to be renamed. Now certain authors claim that the saying "once a homonym always a homonym" legalizes this action, and compels us to use the substitute names. This in spite of the fact that, as I learned from Dr. K. Jordan, the whole of the International commission was opposed to such an interpretation, with the exception of Dr. Stiles. It amounts to saying that if a name has been falsely held to be a homonym, it becomes invalid, the whole matter being dominated by someone's mistake. This is surely absurd, and leads to a lot of unnecessary changes in names.

When an author has not designated holotypes, what is our duty in the case? For instance a German author, who described many hundreds of species, labelled all the specimens "type," and it

was well known that the series were frequently composites. Another German author proposed that he and I should go over the whole collection, and designate holotypes. Circumstances prevented this, but supposing we had done as proposed, should we have been at liberty to pick out a specimen at random from each series and label it holotype? Or should we have carefully read every word of each description, striving to ascertain, if possible, what it was the author actually described? The latter method seems more reasonable but some large and important collections have been type-labelled by the former, and the results are generally considered binding except as occasionally happens, when the holotype label is found on a specimen from a locality not represented in the original collection which the author used, or on a sex not known to the original author.

Notes on the Habits of Melecta sierrae Linsley

In May, 1942, the writer had the opportunity to make a few fragmentary observations on the habits of *Melecta sierrae* Linsley in the vicinity of Miami Ranger Station, Mariposa County, California. In this area it is a parasite of *Emphoropsis cinerea* Smith, subsp. nov. On May 12, an unemerged female was removed from a 1941 *Emphoropsis* cell series along with both sexes of the host. During the next ten days, *Melecta* were encountered frequently visiting flowers of manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* sp.) along with *Emphoropsis*, the females of which were collecting pollen. Females were also seen to enter *Emphoropsis* burrows on several occasions, always during the absence of the host. *Emphoropsis* appears to be only semi-gregarious, many of the burrows being solitary. They were most commonly encountered in banks but several were found in flat ground. The entrance is not protected by a turret.

Melecta sierrae flies much more slowly than its host. The females spend most of the day flying about in search for burrows of *Emphoropsis*, occasionally visiting manzanita flowers for nectar. At night and during periods of cold or wet weather the females remain in resting burrows excavated in the talus at the base of the banks in which the host bees are nesting. Several females may occupy the same burrow and will frequently share it with male *Emphoropsis* and occasionally with *Tetralonia* sp.—E. Gorton Linsley.